UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/46/PV.84
13 April 1992

ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 84th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 13 April 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)
(President)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [114] (continued)

- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: note by the Secretary-General requesting reopening of the consideration of agenda item 78 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) [8] (continued)

- United Nations Conference on Environment and Development [78] (continued)

- Special economic and disaster relief assistance [84] (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 114 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/46/868/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/46/868/Add.1, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that, since the issuance of his communication dated 4 February 1992, El Salvador and Panama have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL REQUESTING REOPENING OF THE CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM 78 (UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT) (A/46/897)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly will now consider a note by the Secretary-General circulated as document A/46/897 transmitting several recommendations from the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for action by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

In order to enable the Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 78, entitled "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development".

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 78.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): May I point out that the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee involve the reconsideration of decisions taken by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/168 of 19 December 1991. In order for the Assembly to take up the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, the Assembly must first agree, under rule 81 of its rules of procedure, to reconsider the relevant provisions of resolution 46/168.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to reconsider the relevant provisions of resolution 46/168.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): May I also take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of the recommendations contained in the note by the Secretary-General?

Since I hear no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

AGENDA ITEM 78 (continued)

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on the four draft decisions recommended by the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in paragraph 6 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/46/897).

Draft decision 4/1 is entitled "Dates of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision 4/1?

Draft decision 4/1 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Draft decision 4/2 is entitled "Observer status in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development for associate members of regional commissions".

May I also take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision 4/2?

Draft decision 4/2 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Draft decision 4/3 is entitled "Status of the European Economic Community at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development".

May I further take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision 4/3?

Draft decision 4/3 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Draft decision 4/4 is entitled "Draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision 4/4?

Draft decision 4/4 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): In the light of the decisions just taken, the Secretariat is requested to incorporate the relevant amendments and revisions in the text of the draft provisional rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 78.

AGENDA ITEM 84 (continued)

SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.69)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now consider a draft resolution on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of cyclone-affected South Pacific countries, contained in document A/46/L.69.

(The President)

I call on the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. James T. STOVALL III (Federated States of Micronesia): The delegation of the Federated States of Micronesia has the high honour to address this body today in its capacity as Chair of the 15-member coalition of South Pacific Island countries known as the South Pacific Forum. Most particularly I speak here in support of those of our number that are Members of the United Nations and have recently experienced devastation caused by a weather phenomenon increasingly prevalent in our region, namely cyclones or typhoons. The countries affected, named in the proposed resolution, are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and the Republic of Vanuatu.

I wish to introduce and commend to the Assembly's favourable attention draft resolution A/46/L.69, which pertains to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of these storm-ravaged islands. The text of the draft resolution notes with appreciation the truly sympathetic response and effective assistance already extended to the victims of these recent disasters by this body, by the United Nations Development Programme and by other organs of the United Nations system, as well as by individual Governments and non-governmental organizations. I wish to lay particular emphasis on that expression of appreciation.

We also extend heartfelt thanks to each of the many Members that have joined as sponsors of the draft resolution.

Natural disasters and their accompanying destruction and loss of life are unfortunately a frequent subject of response by this body. The response is driven in part by a realization of our common exposure to the many

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uncontrollable and often unpredictable mechanisms of the planet. As human beings, we find that the impulse to help one another deal with adverse consequences beyond our control lies close to the bedrock upon which the principle of multilateral cooperation, and hence this Organization, is founded.

So I am not in unfamiliar territory in speaking here today to propose a draft resolution which calls for continuing attention to the serious plight of these Pacific island countries brought on by some of the most destructive storms ever recorded.

Recent experience has shown us that the weather, to put it plainly, is getting worse. In former times serious cyclones were occasional but relatively infrequent occurrences throughout most of the Pacific islands. Now, even in the opening years of this decade, we have seen Samoa, damaged by cyclone "Ofa" in 1990, and still struggling to recover, hammered for four long days and nights in 1991 by an even stronger storm, which went on to cause havoc also in Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna. I will not here reiterate details of that tragic experience, which are already a matter of record.

Another case in point is the Republic of the Marshall Islands, lying just north of the Equator and subject to different trade winds, and so far east as until recently to have been thought invulnerable to typhoons. Nevertheless, these low-lying atolls were washed over by a sudden typhoon in 1990, and no sooner had a very expensive reconstruction got under way, with significant assistance from the United States, than there came another storm which took away the reconstruction and deepened the problems even further. I could also describe similar and equally serious cyclonic events which have occurred recently in the other countries that are main sponsors of the draft resolution.

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Preparedness and mitigation, as referred to in the draft resolution, are not easily achieved by remote island countries, whose people cannot watch television every night to review their weather for the next week. Both early-warning capabilities and resources for effective protection against damage are woefully inadequate. And if liveable weather patterns that have supported island life for centuries are already giving way to a climatological new world order which spells environmental catastrophe for islanders in terms of intensified storm activity, sea-level rise and other destructive consequences, then immediate actions must be taken to relieve the inadequacies in weather prediction and protection.

Thus we humbly approach this body with full awareness of the historic challenges faced today by all Members of the United Nations on many, costly fronts. We ask, nevertheless, that the assistance envisaged by the draft resolution be targeted to achieve more than simple repair. The expressed goals of preparedness and mitigation are aimed in this case at the survival of a group of Pacific island nations, but the same goals are also central to the ability of the entire world to cope with the longer-term adverse effects of human-induced climate change.

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We, then, along with small island States and low-lying coastal regions everywhere are harbingers of the all-encompassing problem - front-line countries, if you will - against an onslaught of apolcalyptic proportions. In that sense, the draft resolution is a timely one, and its adoption by this body would be not only an act deeply appreciated as a humanitarian gesture but also an encouraging sign of the broader resolve of this body and its members.

For those reasons, my delegation calls for the adoption of draft resolution A/46/L.69, and, if it is the Assembly's will, we ask that it do so without a vote.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.69.

Before putting the draft resolution to the vote, I should like to mention that the following States have been added to the list of sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/46/L.69?

Draft resolution A/46/L.69 was adopted (resolution 46/234).

Mr. James T. STOVALL, III (Federated States of Micronesia): I wish only at this point to express the extreme gratitude and thanks of the people of the Federated States of Micronesia and, speaking on behalf of the South Pacific Forum, also for the peoples of Samoa, the Solomon Islands, the

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Republic of the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu. This action gives renewed hope and courage to the peoples of these islands and it is greatly appreciated.

Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to say that our delegation intends to submit soon under agenda item 84, "Special economic and disaster relief assistance", a draft resolution on the devastating effects of the eruption of the Cerro Negro volcano which is now occurring in Nicaragua.

The eruption of the Cerro Negro volcano is affecting the departments of León and Chinandega, where over 500,000 people live, 150,000 of whom are within the area affected by the volcano, which is located in one of the main productive regions of our country. This natural disaster is endangering the efforts now being made by our Government to restore the economic and social development of our country. It is thanks to providence that only a few lives have thus far been lost. Nevertheless, the harmful social and economic effects caused by the fact that many have had to abandon their homes, resulting in their being exposed to dangers and health risks and in serious losses in agriculture and livestock, as well as in other means of livelihood, call for humanitarian assistance making it possible to deal with the crisis at this stage.

Without prejudice to the draft resolution we shall be submitting under this item, we wish at this time to appeal to the States Members of the United Nations to consider the urgent need to take measures to alleviate the tragedy of the people affected.

The Government and the people of Nicaragua are confident that international solidarity will once again be in evidence, given the tragedy we are now experiencing.

Mr. TATTENBACH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): Since Costa Rica is the coordinator of the Group of Central American States this April, it is my honour fully to support the statement of the representative of Nicaragua on this important subject, which involves international solidarity in cases of disaster for the reconstruction of the countries of the South Pacific affected by cyclones.

I should like to say that the countries of Central America feel at one with these countries of the South Pacific because of their links of global solidarity with them and especially because we share with them the Pacific Ocean Basin, which nature has so richly endowed but which is, at the same time, so prone to these natural disasters.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 84.

AGENDA ITEM 137 (continued)

RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

(a) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.57/Rev.1)

(b) REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/46/898/Rev.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): May I remind representatives that the debate on this item was concluded at the 38th plenary meeting, on 31 October 1991.

In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/46/L.57/Rev.1. A draft resolution (A/46/L.23) previously submitted on the item has been withdrawn.

I should like to draw the attention of members to the fact that the changes contained in the revised version of draft resolution A/46/L.57 refer to paragraph 7 (a) (vi), (b) (vi) and (c) (vi) of the annex; those changes reflect the recent restructuring of the Secretariat.

I should also like to mention that the draft resolution before us is a consensus text which is the result of informal consultations undertaken on my behalf by Mr. Ricardo Luna, Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations, as coordinator of the open-ended ad hoc group for informal consultations on agenda item 137. I wish to express our appreciation to him for his efforts.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.57/Rev.1. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/46/898/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/46/L.57/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/46/L.57/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 46/235).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 137.

AGENDA ITEM 147

COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1995: DRAFT DECISION (A/46/L.48)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): In connection with this item the General Assembly has before it a draft decision issued as document A/46/L.68.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/46/L.68.

I should like to inform members that should the General Assembly adopt draft decision A/46/L.68 it is anticipated that the Preparatory Committee would hold a number of meetings in New York in 1992, requiring documentation and interpretation in the six official languages of the Organization. It is hoped that these meetings would be scheduled so as to take advantage of the permanent conference servicing capacity of the Organization. Accordingly, no additional appropriations would be required under section 32 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/46/L.68?

Draft decision A/46/L.68 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 147.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.